THE AMERICAN SPIRIT by MILTON MAYER From the Fiftieth Anniversary Edition
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We were once said (by the elder Holmes) to threaten every government in Europe by our very existence. This ascription of moral power would hardly be made nowadays. If we threaten any government nowadays, we threaten it by military power. We may be fearful to our enemies. We are no longer wonderful, not even to our friends; nor to ourselves.

We may say we have come of age, but what do we mean? What (as the children say) were we going to be when we grew up? Were we cradled to be what we are? Are we what we would like to be? What of the young Jeffersonian dreams? ... Parlous questions, these. Certainly a pattern of brutal expediency has begun to appear in our national behaviour: IS THIS WHAT WE WOULD CALL MATURITY? Shameful act of state piles upon shameful act. Our defense of these acts is juvenile: we say that other people are even more [redacted] shameful than we are, or that others' shamelessness compels us to be just as shameful as they are (and strategically sooner, if possible.) And for all of our expediency, we seem unable to manage effectively.

A couple of random examples may be taken in point. When we landed troops in Lebanon, the Swedish chief of the UN observation team there said, drily, that now that law had been replaced by force no further purpose could be served by the team. Again, at the last session of the UN political committee we succeeded , by the smallest majority yet, in preventing discussion of the recognition of Communist China, and our majority depended upon a dwindling cluster of satellite satraps who had shot themselves into power. We were isolated with our fetid friends, by the reprobation of the people we call mature.

Are we mature when we say that it is not we, the American people, who do these things, but our rulers; as if we were children or subjects and not free adult citizens whose officials are there mere ministers? If our representatives misrepresent us, we would at least protest. But we don't. We take the shameful act of state indifferently; or even at the value our representatives put upon it, as a national triumph. All is won save honor.

Each such historical incident is only an incident and only historical, subject, like all incidents and all history, to aberration and contingency. But the past several years have yielded an habitual succession of such incidents, beginning no later, certainly, than August 6, 1945 when, like Hermann Goering after the shameful raid on Coventry, we justified what we did by saying that we did it to shorten the war. (Hiroshima.) Shamefulness grown customary transcends historical niggling and carries us into the realm of principles. What do we really believe in?

To illuminate this question there must be laid along side it another: What are we really supposed to believe it? From 1942 to 1945, while we passed the ammunition, we sang "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," But Mr. Roosevelt suggested, in a grisly contest to "name" the war, that we call it the War for Survival; and survival depends upon passing the ammunition, not upon Praising the Lord (as witness the fate of the prophets. Of course we went right on printing "In God We Trust" on our currency.) And for the past ten years we have done everything we have done on the ground that we do NOT believe in communism; no hope there, nor in songs or mottoes or names of wars, of determining what we are supposed to believe in. We shall have to go back a bit.

This new nation was (1) conceived in liberty and (2) dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. The question at that time was whether any nation so conceived and so dedicated could long endure. It is 150 years since Jefferson, and the question is just as insistent as it was when the British government dismissed the "self-evident truths" of the Declaration as self-evident nonsense. The demoralization of our national practice calls for a reappraisal of our national precept . It is a hundred years since Lincoln. If what we are supposed to believe in is wrong, it is high time we found out. ... Can a nation be BOTH conceived in liberty AND dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal? Is America possible or, are we, like France, going to become a cataclysmic cropper, this century or next, no matter how effective or ineffective our callous behaviour? ... Reappraisal of this sort is bound to be what Mr. John Foster Dulles would call agonizing. Perhaps that is why we don't undertake it. ... It is appropriate to ask whether we bit off more than we could chew, and whether Holmes was premature.

The only instructive war in our history ended on July 4, 1826, in a draw. On that famous day Adams and Jefferson both died, and the war between them was over. Wiser than any of us are likely to be, they fought a 50-year war of the intellect. Older than any of us are likely to live to be, they went on fighting as patiently and persistently as only good friends can fight, until they could fight no more; Jefferson crying up equality and Adams crying it down.

Of course neither one of them believed in democracy. Neither of them believed that democracy would ever achieve liberty or preserve it. Both believed in government by an aristocracy of the wisest and most virtuous. But Jefferson believed that the people could be educated to choose such an aristocracy to govern them. Adams did not. Adams believed that the people would always be the dupes - and, in their folly, the willing dupes - of the rich, the cunning and the cruel, and would choose no others. ... Jefferson had lived through the French Revolution and had seen it miscarry. So he hedged; the true democracy of the best and ablest men would be recognized and elevated to rule by an egalitarian electorate sobered by the diffuse possession of property, by the privilege of participation in local government and by three years of voluntary (not compulsory) schooling available to every child at public expense. This was the democratic gimmick. Its optimistic author hoped that it would save liberty from equality; he knew that the first did not necessarily follow from the second, however lightly he may have let the Declaration imply that it did. ... Jefferson's hedges against totalitarian democracy have grown higher than ever Jefferson dreamed. But the aristocracy he dreamed of has not materialized. The good are spurned as do-gooders, the wise as egg-heads, and the rulers, so far from being, as Adams predicted, the rich, the cunning and the cruel, are the spittin' images of the people.

One man; one vote; here we have the state alone among all human institutions, assigning no character to merit, counting men instead of weighing them. The traitor to totalitarian democracy is the man who suggests that anybody is abler than anybody else. Lincoln thought that free Negroes shouldn't vote because they were then not competent; apparently, in his time, and to him, white skin was a guarantee of competence; in ours, and to us, skin is. ... Instead of the noble leadership which Jefferson hoped for or the ignoble leadership which Adams feared, WE HAVE NO LEADERSHIP AT ALL. If we will have a tyranny, we ourselves will be the tyrant; we will have no tyrant other. We will have state and national legislatures unanimous on all mortal issues of liberty (on which we ourselves are unanimous), interchangeable swarms of interchangeable bureaucrats doing the actual governing, and as chief executive (that dreadful despot of yours!) an amiable fellow like ourselves who prefers articles to books, digests to articles, bridge to digests, and golf to bridge. ... There is no use arguing with Euclid; two things equal to a third are equal to each other. What is there about Harry and Ike that looks alike? Their epitomic resemblance to us all. They don't represent us; they reflect us. When we smile, they smile. When we scowl, they scowl. When we take snuff they sneeze. We like Ike (or Harry) because we are narcissists. We don't admire them nor are we afraid of them. No danger of THEIR being dictators over US. The founding fathers, obsessed with monarchial absolutists, may rest in peace. ... The cocky Harry and the pontifical Ike are each of them in each of us. In the inequalitarian society the little man says what the big man says; in the equalitarian society, the big man says what the little man says. Harry and Ike take the words right out of our mouths. ... A tyranny without a tyrant; a happy tyranny, where the tyrant and the tyrannized are one. In the totalitarian democracy the tyrant is all, or almost all. It can enact and repeal every imaginable and unimaginable amendment to the Constitution - including the first ten -but it does not need to. Its mere weight in every issue and in every locality is sufficient to suppress every deviation and smother every unpopular liberty that comes to its attention.

How close to this condition are we? Forget the radicals (try and find them, 38 years after Debs in prison got nearly a million votes for President!) and everybody is a Republican or a Democrat; and a Republican or a Democrat is anything..... If the Negroes and Communists would go away, the tyranny of almost all would be the tyranny of all. But the Communists were never there, and the Negroes want the right to be exactly like everybody else.

In the tyranny of all there will be a few men left who, in the words of the late Ralph Ingersoll, "pluck at our sleeve while we take aim at our enemies"? What will their fate be? We have already seen what the tyranny of almost all has been able to do in the past ten years of hot peace. Through our representatives - a few of whom have said publicly, and many privately, that they are afraid to defy us - we have circumscribed the right to radical dissent, the right to associate with circumscribed people, the right to get or keep a job on the basis of competence, and the right to travel. We have emasculated the American's right not to incriminate himself, and, in addition, we have incriminated him not just for what he does and says but for what he thinks. And these circumstances, emasculations and incriminations have all been upheld (however regretfully) by the Nine Young Men. (Supreme Court).

But a people bent upon the destruction of their own liberties do not need laws to help them achieve it. They have only to lower the big wet blanket of social pressure over the errant spark of individuality and put it out. The two most illiberal statutes we have do not require due process of law to be effective. Under the old Comstock Act, which makes it a crime to read any book the postmaster doesn't read, one man in the Port of New York decides what foreign films Americans may see. But Americans don't want to see foreign films unless they have naked women in them. So he lets them all in (UNLESS they have naked women in them), no matter how subversive they are, because Americans cannot be got interested in subversion. ...The censoring is done at the box-office. Understandably; the censor is the whole American people. So, too, with the Humphrey-Dies Act, which makes it a crime to think any thought that the two Hoovers

don't think. Once a man is exposed thinking any such thought, the whole American people will starve him to death instantly.

After Alger Hiss was convicted on the testimony of a self-confessed sinner whose confession exhausted the entire calendar of sins except perjury in Baltimore, it wasn't necessary to suppress the new evidence of the Woodstock typewriter and the FBI's finagling therewith. The reason is that nobody cared. The American press, which is so venal that it will print anything anybody wants to read, didn't print the evidence about the typewriter because nobody wanted to read it. So, too, when the Rosenbergs were executed on testimony like that of Chambers; the Pope and some other cranks protested, but the American people weren't interested. (JM note: they weren't interested because they never had the facts given them.) ... So, too, when Morton Sobell was called upon by strangers in his apartment in Mexico City, accused of being a man named Jones who had robbed a bank in Acapulco, and, as he reached for his identity papers, slugged, kidnapped and delivered to FBI agents waiting for him at the border 600 miles away. Mr. Huggins, the American immigration inspector on duty, with an FBI man at his elbow, made the notation, "Deported from Mexico," on his manifest. But the Mexican Government says that it did not deport him or send Mexican officers to see him, slug him, kidnap him, or deliver him to the FBI. Who did? Nobody knows. Nobody cares. Sobell hadn't been accused of anything; he was going to be accused of something a few months later, and that was enough for the whole American people; they let one more of their liberties go by the boards because it was a liberty that didn't interest them. ... The Supreme Court can equalize liberties but it cannot rescue them from their destruction by the whole American people. The only thing the lawyers can do is to look up the law. Since the law does not say anything about the way an American outside the country can be brought into its criminal jurisdiction, there was nothing that the lawyers could do about the liberty we lost with Sobell. Under the emergency powers of our unrepealed Constition, the Supreme Court could not protect the Nisei from us in 1942 any more than the German Court could protect the victims of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 under the emergency powers of the unrepealed Weimar Constitution.

<u>The only thing that can save liberty is the love of liberty</u>. Liberties that are popular need no saving; only those that are unpopular. The acid test of liberty in the U.S. today is the liberty of its most unpopular citizens to be what makes them unpopular. That means the Communists. But the Communists are over the fence.

We like to think that the Army saved us from Senator McCarthy. We don't like to think that in doing so it confronted us with the choice between a Hitler and a Hindenburg and extended the military domination over the civil power. Still less do we like to think that we have not been saved by McCarthy at all, that McCarthy, though he killed himself winning, won. But for the first time since the Alien and Sedition acts of 1798 a whole class of Americans are without effective American rights. Adlai Stevenson would not be likely today to maintain the right of Communists to be teachers, but Robert Taft maintained it in McCarthy's heydey. It was Fair Deal Harry who said "I put my Communists in jail," and the most generally enlightened state in the Union that displaced one of the best Senators in our history with the worst. Do we suppose that the next McCarthyism will be milder than the last?

Where everybody is free and equal, and nobody wants to be anything but equal, the destruction of liberty, not by invasion or subversion, but by deliquescence, is a breeze; they kept their liberties on ice, and when they were liberated, five years later, their liberties were found to be perfectly preserved. We, who liberated them with plenty of shooting, somehow lost some of our liberties in the process. Jesus was taunted on the Cross with being able to save others' lives but not his own; but we know that he wasn't trying to save his own life. Maybe we aren't trying to save our own liberties.

We are certainly trying to save our lives -an effort that is not peculiarly American, or peculiarly human, or peculiarly heroic in a people who like to say that they would rather die on their feet than live, like the Danes for awhile, on their knees. In the name of security - the summum bonum of rabbits and turnips - we have embraced the militarism which Adams and Jefferson dreaded and from which so many of our ancestors fled Europe in despair of the past and hope of the future. It was once an American Axiom, spelled out in the Virginia and Vermont constitutions and elsewhere, that a great military nation was a totalitarian nation and that militarism was, by definition, immediately inimical to liberty and, ultimately, to equality.

Militarism equalizes men by giving them each and all a tangible stake in its conformity. If you are under 26 and will get into line full-time for two years, and stay there part-time for seven, you get a GI home loan with no down payment. Will you want to argue with the Pentagon in the meantime? Visiting Moscow, Walter Lippman reported with dismay "the universal dogma that <u>profits are the compelling motive in American armament</u>." The New York Times reports that the prices paid by the Pentagon have risen three to five percent every year. "When reporters asked the Pentagon officials whether they had appealed to the business men to try to pare their prices on military goods," Assistant Defense Secretary McNeil laughed. "We hinted a bit,' he said."

We are all merchants of death now, under 26 or over. The value of my house has doubled in the past ten years. So has yours if you're lucky enough to be near a new military post or Defense Department contractor. Jefferson thought that a free press was integral to the preservation of our liberties, but our press, apart from its other interesting characteristics, is as freely and unanimously in favor of militarism as you and I are. In the profit system profit is the compelling motive, they say in Moscow. We're all making a profit on guns and deploring juvenile delinquency. ... Fifty years ago in America a soldier was not to be seen, except in the Skid Row recruiting stations. The scandalous un-Americanism of the Grand Army of the Republic was so long remembered that until President Wilson made his Preparedness appeal in their behalf, men in uniform were not admitted to respectable public places. And when this same President Wilson, preparing for peace three years later, proclaimed peacetime conscription to be the root evil of Prussianism, nobody outside the American Legion said him nay. In 40 years we have deracinated the Prussian evil twice - in Prussia - and now we have peacetime conscription here.

The foundation of civil liberty is the devotion to civil society. We are fully militarized now-ready, willing, and in some quarters eager to defend or attack the world. We are the "garrison state" we shuddered at 20 years ago. And the preponderance of what we have done to ourselves is yet to be felt; the American generation which has been taught liberty by drill sergeants is only now beginning to assert itself. The military caste, implacable enemy of both liberty and equality, is just barely discernible in its beginnings.

The militarization of our country, itself a temporary equalizer, is one of the three great changes ... of the last 50 years. The other two are the equalization of economic and of racial opportunity. Neither Jefferson, nor Lincoln, nor even the LaFollette of 1909 imagined the true magnificence of these two achievements in 50 years. The first began with the federal income tax -that Bolshevik institution - in 1914, and ended, I HOPE, with the bill I got from my plumber last month for 2 hours labor at $6.25 an hour. My plumber is now equaler than I am. ... Our advance against the racial inequality has been still more phenomenal, coming to a spectacular and certainly only temporary, culmination on May 17, 1954. Some of our Southern brethren are less passionate for equality than the rest of us would like them to be, but, with some slight nudging, they are eliminating the crime of segregation at least as fast as the rest of us are eliminating the sin of discrimination. Who can any longer doubt that 50 years from now new generations will no more hanker after overt racism than the present generation hankers after overt slavery.

But if I am a fool, and in my folly abdicate my liberty, and my plumber and my Negro get to be just like me, just where will we be, besides being equal fools. Totalitarian democracy, the ineluctable consequence of equal foolishness, will, instead of being rampant and dominant, be absolute. The remaining cracks and crevices in its structure, such as the already narrowed right of conscientious objection, will be filled. The monologue will be monolithic.

And so we approach the point where, to our great astonishment, equality, the proposition to which we are dedicated, is the enemy of the liberty in which we are conceived, and the answer to our first question - Can any nation so conceived and dedicated long endure? turns out to be: Maybe, and maybe not. Adams and Jefferson would be just as astonished as we are.

Where, with all their wisdom and foresight did they go wrong? If they were mislead at all in their surmises it may have been by their preoccupation with the single form of tyranny they knew so well - the tyranny of an absolutist government over the people. ... Liberty, to our first American ancestors, seemed to consist in the individual's freedom from oppression by the King. All of our subsequent immigration fortified this single focus: nearly all of our people came from societies ruled by tyrants.

Up to Jefferson's time men had not thought seriously of society itself as the tyrant, if for no other reason than that they had thought of social chance as circular, with democracy as both successor and precursor of tyranny. But the rising tide of equality, engendered by the romantic and anti-ecclesiastical faith in the perfectivility of man, beginning in Jefferson's time swept every objection before it. The answer to oppression was democracy.

Jefferson had this faith, in restrained measure, as Adams and all of the older Christian and pre-Christian philosophers had not. But within a decade after his death, a young French aristocrat, freshly seeing America, and accepting democracy as the most just form of government, thought he detected a fatal flaw in the democratic dream. "Democratic communities," - this is de Tocqueville, De la democratie en Amerique - "have a natural taste for freedom. ...But for equality, their passion is ardent, insatiable, and invincible; they call for equality in freedom, and, if they cannot obtain that, they still call for equality in slavery." (This same de Tocqueville wrote, a century and a quarter ago, about America and Russia: Their starting point is different, their ways are diverse, yet each of them seems calld upon by the secret design of Providence to control some day, the destinies of half the world.") ... He found equality the fundamental fact about America from which all others seem to be derived.

" All men and all powers seeking to cope with this irresistible passion will be overthrown and destroyed by it..." Including the free individual? "As the conditions of men become equal amongst a people , individuals seem of less, and society of greater, importance; or rather, every citizen, being assimilated to all the rest, is lost in the crowd and nothing stands conspicuous but the great and imposing image of the people at large. This naturally gives the men of democratic periods a lofty opinion of the privileges of society and a very humble notion of the rights of individuals; they are ready to admit that the interests of the former are everything, and those of the latter, nothing. " .... How far had this "passion " affected the individualistic spirit in 1835? "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. In any constitutional state in Europe, every sort of religious and political theory may be freely preached and disseminated. ... But in... the U.S. there is but one authority, one element of strength and success, with nothing beyond it... the omnipotence of the majority..."

This, then, was America, where, he said, everyone talked and almost no one conversed, where equality produced conformity and conformity identity; less than a decade after Jefferson was in his grave. And what would happen to this America in another century? In another century the industrial revolution would have matured. "What can be expected," said de Tocqueville, "of a man who has spent 20 years of his life making pins?" The century passed. "The American voter," said James Reston in the New York Times, November 9, 1958, "is immune to ideological talk about everything except communism, with a tendency to prefer personality "- Jefferson would have said demagoguery - "to anything else."

All unsuspected by Jefferson or Adams, the real villains of the egalitarian piece are Euclid, Galileo, Newton, Farady, Lavoisier and Boyle, and their handmaidens, Watt, Whitney, George Stephenson, Bell, Morse, Marconi, Edison and Ford. These are the scamps who opened the floodgates of progress and inundated the Rousseauian woods forever, in India and China and Russia no less (if a little later) than in America. These are the unintending authors of the characteristic process of our time - the liberation of peoples and the enslavement of persons.

These handful of conspirators have enabled us to get together whether or not we have anything to do to talk to each other whether or not we have anything to say, and to act in effective concord whether or not we should act at all. They have enabled us, like our present model, the Russians, to construct things that are so amazing that we forget to wonder whether they should be constructed In their innocence they have created all the Golems that rule us all equally. If to talk like this is to be blackly pessimistic, or still worse, anti-intellectual, we may ponder the warning of Rabelais, long ago, that science without conscience is the ruin of the soul.

The flood of technological progress ensued almost immediately after Jefferson and Adams. They had both pointed with horror at what they both called the canaille of the cities of Europe - the millions of uneducated and unpropertied men pressed so close together as to be a homogeneous mob, a monstrous body wanting only a head. In Jefferson's time, as in Aeneas', a Stentor could reach only a few thousand people with his voice, and a man with a missive or a missile could travel only a few miles a day. ... A hundred years later, the villains, their villainy mass-produced, have made a contiguous and contented canaille of us all. We are one great city of 170,000,000 governed by those equalizers known as mass media of communication and mass means of transportation. The transportation has enabled us all to huddle together for a weekday in town or a Sunday in the country. The communication is one-way communication. Big Brother, in all his guises of print, picture, and voice, does not have to watch us, any more than the snake-charmer has to watch the snake; he has only to keep us watching him. All of us together.

The temple of technology, besides equalizing our intelligences at the National Broadcasting - Columbia Broadcasting level, equalized our hearts by spreading before us an ever-increasing abundance of goods within (or just beyond) the reach of all of us. We became the first people in modern history among whom poverty was only marginal , and the first society whose producers of luxury articles could own the articles they produced. The traitors to the new American spirit came to include those party-poops who held that human happiness was still possible to a one-car family. ... It was not alone that we got rich; it was the way we got rich that prevented the rise of Jefferson's aristocracy of virtue and wisdom. Our folk heroes were Rockefeller, Carnegie and Ford, none of whom was preminently virtuous; still less so, wise. If Henry Ford could get a billion dollars together and still maintain that history is bunk, why should anyone else who wanted a billion dollars study history? From being non-philosophical, -like any raw people confronted with practical obstacles and practical opportunities -we proceeded aggressively and defensively to be anti-philosophical. ... But the defense of liberty, not one's own, but of one's Communist neighbors', is a matter of principle. It is impossible to defend liberty concretely without being abstract about it and seeing that it is applicable everywhere or nowhere. But abstraction is philosophy and we are an ati-philosophical people. And we are not becoming more philosophical. The puny effort to introduce philosophy into our equalized educational system has been wiped out overnight by the Russian Sputnik. We have discovered that liberty does not produce technological superiority. Since what we want is technological superiority, liberty becomes superfluous, or a positive hindrance to be relegated

from desuetude to destruction.

Is it possible that Adams and Jefferson overestimated our love of liberty in the first place? We cried liberty in 1776 while we maintained a slave society, and the offenses charged against George III in the Declaration make him sound, by comparison with the tyrants we have heard of since, like Peck's Bad Boy. We called for a "separate and equal" station among the powers of the earth; perhaps we were thinking about national independence when we talked about liberty. If the oneis the same as the other, then the loss of the first means the loss of the second, This is the way the Hungarians and others, who never had liberty, seem to feel. It is not the way the Danes felt in 1940. Have we so little confidance in our love of liberty that we must sacrifice liberty to security lest, once we have chains, we will come to love them. ... The "peculiar institution" of chattel slavery may have contributed, too, to a conception of liberty as corporeal. Even the Pilgrimage from Leyden was a matter of moving, and we have been moving around ever since. There are men still living who remember free land. The Americans whodid not like a town or an occupation went somewhere else or got another. There were never enough men for jobs except in depressions. And even then a man KNEW he'd get a job soon. And if he turned out to be wrong -even if he died jobless - his hope was undimmed.

We were a new kind of people, hopeful and bold. In Europe, Asia, Africa it was different and always has been. If a man lost a job he might never find another. So he was mighty careful not to lose a job, and to do and say whatever was required of him to find or hold one. Economic liberty should have nourished political liberty here. Certainly my father, if anyone had told him 50 years ago that he had to take an oath purging himself of treason before he could get or keep a job would have said, "Where do you think you are, Russia?" ... We Americans could, to be sure, afford to be free. Liberty is a luxury of the rich, and that is why our talk of liberty in the world today falls upon deaf ears, on the ears of those who, if they ever dream of liberty, always struggle for bread. How can we imagine what it is to be hungry, to have had parents and grandparents who were hungry, and to know that unless we do something revolutionary, ANYTHING revolutionary, our children and our grandchildren will be hungry? My father did not know, or care, whether Korea was in the Caribbean or the Mediterranean. He did not, and we can not, imagine how hungry people could be. ... We could afford to be generous, and we meant to be. Our situation has made of us the most open-hearted people the world has ever seen. But we could not imagine the need. We can not stand still. A month after we and the Chinese between us had burned down 65 percent of the habitations of South Korea we were moved greatly to help; but five years afterward the need had barely been touched and we had forgotten Korea. .... Nor have we any idea how rich we are; two years ago we thought we had opened our hearts and our homes to the Hungarian refugees, but in the end we accepted the fewest (in terms both of our population and our national income) of any receiving country. (Switzerland, which did not exploit them for anti-communism, accepted the most.) ... We know we are gorged after Sunday dinner, but how gorged we are we cannot imagine. The last time I heard about our surplus food commodities -they have since increased - they were costing us almost one million dollars a day for storage. We cannot eat them, we cannot sell them, we cannot give them away without wrecking the world market, bu which we mean the "free" or capitalist market. Is it any wonder that the hungry do not hate Communist dictatorship any more than they hate capitalist democracy.

While our illimitable surpluses eat up our moral status abroad, our unlimited commitment to violence eats up our moral intentions at home/ Our Secretary of Commerce tell us (not knowing that he is quoting Rudolph Hess verbatim) that we must have more guns and less butter. And if we, then certainly those we would like to feed. More than 90 percent of all our foreign aid is military, "extended indiscriminately," says Senator Fulbright, "to governments which serve the needs of the people and alike to those who do not." The hungry cry out for bread and we give them iron; provided, of course, that their rulers chant the anti-Communist catechism. Is this maturity?

WHY , alone among the Western Nations, and the strongest and richest and most remote of them all, have we let liberty go for security and forged upon ourselves the shackles of fear represented by our unique pursuit of anti-Americanism? Ours is not the soil in which revolution grows. What are we afraid of? We used to say that the difference between us and Nazi Germany was that here a knock on the door at dawn meant the milkman; are we less afraid now that we have our own secret police who take men from their beds? Would we be unafraid if the Soviety Union did not exist in a hungry world? If Communist China did not exist? Or if only our own kind of people, the rich, existed?

Neither the poor nob the rich necessarily dream of liberty. Incapable as we are of even imagining what it is like to be poor, we can only hazard a guess that when such people dream, they dream not of liberty, but of bread. And what do the rich dream of? They are said to dream bad dreams of losing their riches; they have heard tell that nobody loves the rich.

If we, equal and equally rich, do not love liberty so much that we will sacrifice our riches to it and go for broke to keep it, and if we have never thought much about liberty anyway, it would be no wonder that we didn't see our liberties being lost. Neither, when they were ri

and equal enough, did the Romans, and they were learned in liberty. When Christians were deprived of their liberties in Rome, the Romans saw no loss of liberty, since there were only a handful of Christians, who, in the Roman view, were all traitors anyway. When Communists are deprived of their liberties in America, the rest of us do not see that we are losing ours because they are only a handful of Communists who, in our view, are all traitors anyway.

Fear intensifies our equality, erasing from our faces all our individuality and replacing it with the stricken visage of the girl on the colored cover of the paperback whodunits. The more bombs we have the more frightened we are. What will set us free from the prison of fear to redress the imbalance between equality and liberty? There is no use talking about pacifism because pacifism means saying NO to the tyrannical many, not, as in colonial India, to the tyrannical one, and any independent people who would seriously think of saying NO would already be free. ... Perfect love was once said to be capable of driving out fear. ... But is there any use talking about perfect love if we no longer believe either in the perfectibility of man or in the power of God? Jefferson believed in both.

Our achievements since Jefferson have been so remarkable that we aretempted to worship of the work of our hands, like the Communists in Russia, and, like them, to the supposition that we can do anything. ... Ours is a do-it-yourself spirit. And unless everybody winds up doing the same thing himself, there is still there the vestigial sign of the love of liberty. But there are some things you can't do yourself. You can't drive out your own fear by getting there fastest with the mostest. You can't get a man - or a world - with a gun. Mr. Dulles, who used to represent American Christendom in the World Council of Churches, told a Congressional committee: "The purpose of the State Department is to look out for the interests of the United States. Whether we make friends I do not care ...I do not care whether they like us or hate us."

You can damn the torpedoes but you can't damn mankind. Nor can you make yourself loved and trusted as long as you love only them which love you and put your trust in violence while you say you put your trust in God. This is phariseeism ...like the Pharisees of old , who made long prayers for pretense...

The massive society goes - as de Tocqueville observed - on one big kick after another. In our time there has been the prohibition kick, the automobile kick, the stock-market kick, the Roosevelt kick, theliberation kick, the vitamin kick, the psychiatry kick, the un-American kick and the tranquilizer kick, along with "Pray for Peace" on our postage cancellation machines. ...

Maybe, in order to escape worldly authoritarianism - of the one or the many, we have got to learn something that our silver-spooned experience has not taught us. The Greeks were fond of saying that man is schooled in suffering. Maybe we have got to suffer. It looks as if we might. We never have and we won't like it ... Mayoe we have got to get ourselvesafflicted. It looks as if we are trying. ...

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THE PROGRESSIVE - Fiftieth Anniversary Issue - January 1959

THE MASS MAN - by Sidney Lens

One of the striking features of American postwar life has been the virtual disappearance of the American Left. A generation ago, the Radical Left, though small by European standards, nonetheless played a significant role in American affairs. At one time the Communist Party had 100,000 members and many times that number of sympathizers and fellow-travelers. Norman Thomas, running for President on the Socialist Party ticket in 1932, polled nearly a million votes and enlisted a respectable segment of the labor and intellectual world in its cause. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) , formed in 1935, was studded with Socialists, Communists, Trotskyists, and Syndicalists; it was they who gave it its vital elan. A militant, leftist, unemployed workers' movement and a radical intelligentsia gave the 1930's an aura of leftism now completely gone. The Communist Party today has no more than 5000 members, of whom perhaps 2000 remain in persistent "rightist" opposition. The Socialist Party, which re-emerged with the Social-Democratic Federation two years ago and has now absorbed the small Independent Socialist League, has 1,300 members. The Trotskyists add another 700 to 1000 members to the roster. Perhaps the most effective force on the Left in the United States these past few years has been the Gandhians. The 13,000-member Fellowship of Reconciliation and such groups as the War Resisters' League have played the most spirited role in America in fighting militarism, a traditional target of the Left. (JM note: but most ineffective - reaching too few, talking to the already convinced, wielding little power.) They have organized walks on Washington and the United Nations, sent a small ketch into the Pacific to protest the bomb tests, and have been the principle force in initiating whatever there has been of public protest against rampant militarism. (JM note: mostly Quakers and various liberal groups with a semi-religious tinge.) But the organized Left in America is obviously weaker than in any other Western nation. As an influence in national affairs, it does not exist.

The question is : Why? ... Apologists for the "American Way of Life" conclude that there is no longer any need for a Left in the United States. We have achieved a standard of living so high, they say, that a Left is irrelevant. Speaking to a British reporter recently, Walter Reuther insisted that "the labor movement in America is developing a whole new middle class. Last year the average automobile worker got more than $5,000 a year income. Presumably this was intended to explain why American labor does not need a labor or socialist party. ... Such estimates are, of course, part truth and part fable. There is a new "aristocracy of labor" in America that is well-off by previous standards. The employed workers in the mass production industries, like the employed workers in the construction industries, earn $100 a week and up; many of them live on a standard considerably higher than any comparable group in Europe. ... Yet this is not the full picture. The number of these favored workers is certainly no more than eight or ten million. Behind them are many millions who still live in varying degrees of pverty. There are two million agricultural workers who are paid only 72 cents an hour -less than one-third of an auto worker's pay. There are millions of hotel employees, laundry workers, retail clerks, and white collar employees who similarly earn only 40% or less than what an auto or steel worker receives. Millions of Americans are far worse off than their counterparts in, say, Sweden or Denmark or Norway. And these include not only the Negro Sharecroppers in Mississippi, but many white workers in the North. As late as 1954 one of every six income units (families and unattached individuals) was earning less than $40 a week. Of the six and a half million employed Negroes in the U.S. in 1950 (the latest figures available in the Statistical Abstract), fully two-thirds earned less than $30 a week. For many, the much-vaunted American standard of living is a statistic rather than a reality. Even viewed from the simple material point of view there is both need and room in America for a Left to express the aspirations of the millions of underprivileged who who still live in slums and in poverty. Beyond that, however, there is a need for a Left that arises from such questions as war and peace and the tragic foreign policy of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (and before him Dean Acheson). Yet no Left emerges. Why?

There is slowly evolving in America a "mass man" who is immune to radicalism, even when his social needs demand it, and whose horizons seem incapable of being extended beyond the present scheme of things. Whatever rebelliousness there is in this mass man is a rebelliousness without a cause to harness it. He "rebels" only in his own behalf or that of his family; he seldom if ever ties it in with social rebellion. Thousands of rebellious youth - "rebels without a cause" - become juvenile delinquents, who in another era might have become young socialists. Most youngster of course, are decent, law abiding, often even studious. But it is significant that rebelliousness in youth has no cause to latch on to; in the extreme, therefore, it ends in delinquency and crime.

Never in history has a nation imposed on itself the strictures of conformity as thoroughly as America has done since World War II. Hitler had to use unabashed terror and concentration camps to exact conformity from the German people. Stalin murdered a whole generation of Bolshevik leaders and imprisoned millions in slave camps to create a similar mood of fear and conformity. But in postwar America, without slave camps, without frame-up trials (McCarthy...) , without totalitarian terror, a whole nation has mesmerized itself into conformity. The era of McCarthyism -now tapering off - made people fearful of their jobs, but not for their lives. Outside of a

dozen or two political prisoners, Communists and Trotskyists prosecuted under the Smith Act, no one was jailed for his political beliefs. Conformity was not won with the whip. (JM- perhaps psychologically?) In the US it was self-imposed, willingly accepted by the majority of its citizens as the normal way of life.

The failure of the Left to grow is thus the result not merely of Leftist errors, but also of the mass man mentality which is robbing a once rebellious and radical nation of its voice of dissent. There are men who speak against the conformist trend, but their number has diminished and above all their seed has found no soil in which to take root. The individual American has quietly but methodically changed into a new type of man.

The salient characteristic of this new man is his desire to escape from the big world AROUND HIM. According to anthropologist Margaret Mead, the new American seeks to "escape into one's own little house and one's own little garden and one's own children and the small bit of life which one can make a success in; and the concentration upon it becomes a flight from larger issues. Thus the average American who spends thousands of dollars on his son's education will refuse to spend a penny to fight against radioactive fall-out which may thwart his son's future; or upon a political campaign against the Dulles foreign policy which may lead to his son's extermination. The new American views everything in the narrow light of home and family. He runs away from the big problems -war, peace, depression, social injustice, political corruption. There is, says Margaret Mead, a sense that the world's gotten so big and unmanageable that it's very hard for individuals to be able to influence it very much. There is also a dread of disaster because this country is conscious of the possibility of total destruction. It is almost as if they were trying to live a a 50-year life within ten or fifteen years. The average American today seeks essentially material pleasure - as if he were living just for today, his last moment on earth.

To exploit this craving for escape America spends the fantastic sum of $10.5 billion a year on advertising and public relations - $1 of every $40 of its total national income. Much of this is spent on the most expensive of all media, television. ... The staggering total of $10.5 billion worth of propaganda annually has a pervasive effect on American behaviour patterns. Americans would say - if asked - that they are unaffected by the nonsense that passes for advertising, but the process is more invidious. The advertiser not only insists on the half-truths or half-lies used in peddling his product; but vetoes any controvery or hard fact of life in the television or radio programs he sponsors because the result might be a bad association with the product. The world of American television, and consequently the of the American viewer, is a make-believe world, which is the ideal escape from the real world. The American mass man no longer makes mature judgments in the purchase of commodities. Instead of buying oranges he is buying the symbol of vitality; instead of buying an automobile he is buying prestige. The American woman doesn't buy cosmetics, she buys hope and surcease of sexual anxiety, itself often the product of the propagandists. Advertising appeals to deep-seated fears or wishes -to the child in man, rather than to his mature self. It entrenches childish attitudes. If it were confined only to the purchase of cosmetics or brassieres this might not be shattering to the nation. But the techniques of motivational selling and the fraudulent symbols that go with it are used also in politics, in "culture", in book writing, in almost everything of significance in American life.

The escapist mass man seeks no insights into politics. He accepts the synthetic and superficial politics of the mass media, the partisan press, the radio commentator. He is told that the "enemy " is communism, and he accepts this thesis without knowing what communism is (except that it is presumably atheistic, Godless, materialistic). He is told that we must have more and better armaments than the Russians, and he accepts the expenditure of $42 billion a year for armaments even while he is decrying inflation and "the high spending in Washington." The mass man indulging his leisure in escapism forms only child-like rather than mature opinions. As a consequence his leaders are also child-like; they speak the same baby-talk as their constituents because that is the only way to "win votes."

Consider the rationale behind McCarythism. The American people woke up a few years after the war to find that though they had won the military phase of the conflict they were losing the cold war. They asked themselves why. A mature insight would have indicated that we were losing to the Communists because we were fighting against or were neutral on the great revolution surging throughout Asia and Africa. But this was a mature estimate and the majority of people were not prepared to face it. Instead, McCarthy the demogogue, came along with a more simple answer which gained wide acclaim. We were losing the war, said the late Senator from Wisconsin, because the Communists had "infiltrated" our State Department and were traitorously yielding one bastion after another to the Soviets. These "hidden Communists" had betrayed such fine allies as Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Ree, or had given away our atom bomb secrets. Millions of Americans, unwilling or unable to look at the problem maturely, accepted this childish nonsense. Almost no one in Washington had the courage to attack this ridiculous thesis frontally; the hysteria mounted and became a national obsession.

Acceptance of conformist cliches has penetrated even into the supposedly radical ranks of the labor movement. A year ago the National Labor Service made a survey of local union leaders at labor summer schools. It should be noted that these men were among the best informed and most socially conscious unionists. What the Labor Service found was painfully illuminating: 3 out of 5 unionists would deny an atheist the right to teach in college." Almost half felt that socialists should also be refused the right to teach. One quarter thought that atheists and socialists should be expelled from their unions. 80% said that Communists should be expelled and 75% wanted Communists to be deprived of their American citizenship.(JM note: How many were Catholics? How many gave answers they thought would be "safe"?) Yet 94 % insisted that Negroes must be given full rights in the unions and in job promotions and 80% said that Negro children should be permitted to attend schools side by side with whites. (JM note: the open conflict on the race question in America has educated these people into a more adult point of view. As yet they have not been exposed to an open fight revealing all sides of the issues mentioned above.) All of this indicates how garbled is the estimate of civil liberties by the new mass man, and how easily and childishly he accepts conformist views.

A survey by Purdue University of the opinions of teen-agers was equally revealing. More than half the highschool children polled thought that wire-tapping and the third degree should be legalized and that police should censor books, movies, radio and TV "to shield us from improper thinking." (How many were Catholics? How many "addicts" of gangster films?)-JM note.) Professors who questioned University of Wisconsin students found that most of them rejected the rights of freedom of the press, assembly and worship guaranteed by the American constitution A few years ago the Capital Times of Madison, Wisconsin, assigned a reporter to get signatures on a "petition" which was actually a section of the Declaration of Independence on which the nation was founded in 1776. All but one of many hundreds approached refused to sign this "Communist" document.

The mass man turns inward on himself, away from the reality of the world at large. He responds therefore only to subconscious motivational appeals, and the whole society soon learns to rely on such appeals . A few years ago a large publishing house decided to publish a novel with appeal to Catholics. The publisher didn't wait until some writer had presented such a novel to his editors. Instead he sent out dozens of salesmen to find out what Catholics would like to read about in a novel on Catholicism. The editors then called in a prominent writer, gave him a list of the points that polled the highest, and assigned him the task of writing the novel to order.The book eventually sold more than a million copies. But it wasn't written in any creative sense; it was mass produced for a mass mind - for the mass man. ...

Probably no aspect of American life so reveals the mass-man nature of the average citizen as the introduction of advertising and public relations techniques into politics. Both political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, engage top Madison Avenue advertising agencies to guide their national elections. These men figure out all the "gimmicks" for "selling" their candidates just as if they were selling soap and cigarettes. ... During the 1956 campaign a reporter interviewed two farmers in North Dakota; one owned 1600 acres of land and was moderately wealthy; the other owned 160 acres and was having a hard time. The wealthier farmer intended to vote for President Eisenhower because Eisenhower was an "individualist" who opposed the "collectivism" of the Roosevelt New Deal"; the other farmer also supported Eisenhower, but because he expected him to continue the welfare policies of the New Deal. The Madison Avenue public relations experts had sold both farmers on opposite views of the same man. ... The reason for such confusion is not hard to find. A leading business journal commented in the last Presidential election campaign that "both parties will "merchandise" their candidates and issues by the same methods that business has developed to sell goods. These include specific selection of appeals and planned repetition...radio spot announcements and ads will repeat phrases with a planned intesity...billboards will push slogans of proven power. Candidates need, in addition to rich voices and good diction, to be able to look "sincerely" at the TV camera." ... The major issues of the day are "sold" to the American mass man in the same way as cosmetics. The citizen must not be tired with long discourses; he must get his politics in short one minute radio announcements or five minute television talks. He must have it presented in the least argumentative form. One of the depressing features of political campaigns in the U.S. is the paucity of issues. The differences between candidates of the two major parties is usually negligible. For the most part they agree on the issues of foreign policy, war, militarism; and their disagreements on matters of internal policy such as taxes are often so minor that they cannot be built up into significant issues. <u>What takes place in this vacuum is a build-up of the individual.</u> Eisenhower is presented as the all-knowing father - to give the citizen a feeling of security. His views on political issues are underplayed; the trick is to sell his personality. The Madison Avenue salesmen tried similar tricks with Adlai Stevenson in the 1956 campaign, but he evidently was not as saleable a commodity as Eisenhower; he did not have a fatherly appeal.

One of the most frequently heard arguments for voting for a particular candidate is that "the other fellow can't win." Many a voter who has socialist leanings votes for a Democrat because "the Socialists have no chance." Thousands of sincere pacifists vote for candidates with avowed militarist programs because "we have no other choice." In the era of the mass man even the people who are politically articulate succumb to the theories of the "lesser evil"...

Arnold Toynbee has written that a society begins to decline at what seems to be the height of its power, when it loses its "creative minority." Conformity in America is whittling away that creative minority. There are still large wellsprings of dissent. There are still many men who think bold new thoughts . (JM note: AND women!) There are still tens of thousands of fine, idealistic youth looking for new ways of life. But the trend to conformity is engulfing this "creative minority" Almost every new idea must run the gamut of the charge of "communism", the 20th Century's counterpart of the 17th's "witchcraft."

The average citizen considers men like Justice William O. Douglas, George Kennan and James P. Warburg, who are proposing a foreign policy more sensible than Dulles' brinkmanship, as "soft" on communism. The moods of the mass man make it difficult for a creative minority to function or to flourish. (JM note: anti-intellectualism; the result of mis-education.) Dissenters are afraid of their own dissent. A whole pattern of life is emerging in which conformity is the highest value.

The American Legion of Illinois this year demanded that the state stop committing patients to mental hospitals until an investigation could determine whether mental health programs were being"infiltrated by socialistic and subversive influences." The Legion also asked for the right to "help" select textbooks, again because of the danger of "subversive influences." The McCarthyist tirade in the Senate is finished, but the drive of conformity makes" anti-communism" the accepted pattern of thought

How this drive has corroded individualism is indicated by what has happened to the junior executive in the business and professional world. William H. Whyte has written a penetrating book about the "organization man" who likes to pride himself on individuality, but who pays compulsive fealty to the organization and to conformity. The social ethic of the organization man has three propositions: "a belief in the group as the source of creativity; a belief in "belongingness" as the ultimate need of the individual; and a belief in the application of science to achieve the 'belongingness'." .. The organization man would never dream of subscribing to the Communist paper, The Worker, so that he could be more effective in answering the arguments of communism. He would never read such liberal publications as The Nation, The New Republic, or The Progressive as he rides to work on his commuter's train. His views are fashioned by the "collective" in which he works and lives. He belongs to such non-controversial organizations as the Parent-Teacher's Association; the Kiwanis, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and "the" Club - the social organization of members of his class where he can swim, dance, and play golf, poker and bridge. He can simulate all kinds of emotion on political problems, but he argues only in the ignorant terms of cliches: "Labor is taking over the country. " "The Communists are infiltering our schools."

The dream of this "organization man" is not any social idea but "getting ahead." Two years ago the popular Sunday supplement PARADE published an article on "How To Be A Social Climber." It described social climbing as "healthy" and gave 12 "scientific" ways to participate in this activity. According to the writer, you must be "somewhat dissatisfied" - not too happy, not too unhappy. You must be dissatisfied enough to want to "get ahead," to "climb socially." You must also know how to act, acquire the "secular rituals of eating, dressing, behaving correctly in social and work situations." Above all, you must find a "sponsor", a man ahead of you who can help you climb the ladder of"success." "As you go up the social scale," the writer advises the reader, "you must be able to leave your old friends and old environment if need be...Once you become too comfortable in a specific environment, you are likely to stop climbing. You ought not to make friends that you can't easily detach yourself from, and you ought not to have ideas which make you unacceptable to your "sponsor." Here in a single vulgar appraisal of "the good life" is <u>the essence of the new social ethic</u> that guides America's middle class - superficial friendships, getting ahead, climbing socially, belonging, conforming.

The "organization man is the antithesis of Toynbee's creative minority. His ideas, if any, are limited, narrow, tailored for the organization rather than for society as a whole. For the organization man, to be a maverick is the worst crime of all. He tries to be slightly different from his neighbor so he can get ahead in the business and professional world, but he must never be so different that he stands out as a nonconformist. The organization man is thus merely a species of the mass man, a specific form of mass man suited for the new middle class. He is a retreat from individuality and creativeness, a buttress of the status quo (except in technological matters or business ideas). A few decades ago the working class found many leaders in the middle class. Now both classes are discouraging bold leadership because their members are becoming mass men.

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In its propaganda overseas the U.S. likes to picture its citizens as happy people. It points to the 55 million automobiles, the tens of millions of refrigerators , TVs and gadgets of American life as "proof" of a superior standard of living. It quotes reams of statistics from high wage scales, the numbers of workers who own their own homes, and automobiles, as"proofs"of happiness. But the American is *not* happy; he has merely found the most extensive way in all history to escape from his unhappiness, his insecurity.

"Our contemporary Western society ," writes Erich Fromm, "in spite of its material, intellectual and political progress, is increasingly less conducive to mental health, and tends to undermine the inner security, happiness, reason, and the capacity for life in the individual; it tends to turn him into an automaton who pays for his human failure with increasing mental sickness, and with despair hidden under a frantic drive for work and so-called "pleasure." It is not the "happiness" of the American citizen that undercuts radicalism, as much as the efficacy of escapism and conformity. Something new has been added to the sociology of our times...

But here certainly is one of the new major problems of our epoch, an unexpected feature of life that neither Marx nor any other socialist thinker blueprinted in any detail. How to appeal to the mass man? How to win him back to reality? How to interest him in his own vital welfare, in the problems of war and peace, depression and hunger? How to win him as a friend of the underdeveloped nation now in its national revolution, other than by appealing to his naive and ineffective anti-communism? Before the Left goes forward in America it will have to wrestle with these problems. Before America itself can march ahead it will have to reverse the trend to conformity, and begin once again to cultivate, or at least tolerate, a "creative minority."

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Excerpts from NO WAR, NO POVERTY? – by Stuart Chase

...One is forced to believe after taking thought that somehow Big Powers are going to negotiate their way around a war which nobody could win and which everybody in the world would lose. One draws a sigh of cautious relief but he soon begins to wonder what will happen to the economic systems of the West when governments no longer spend 80 percent of their budgets buying lethal hardware. The financial community can hardly be expected to dance in the streets on the day that peace breaks out while the market plunges downward. A huge adjustment will have to be made affecting every segment of the economy. Russia, China and other dictatorships , can take it in stride, shifting manpower from munitions to bathtubs and boots without upsetting any vital vested interests.

Some readers may refuse to believe that poverty has been abolished in the United States or anywhere else. In one sense of course they are right – depending on how poverty is defined. If we accept the usual definition as a condition where the necessities of life –food , shelter, clothing, health service and education – are not met, and where not even the hope of meeting them exists, the great majority of American families are not in a state of poverty; they have both groceries and hope.

In his celebrated book, "The Affluent Society," J. K. Galbraith notes that "case" poverty and "insular" poverty persist in America but affect only a small fraction of our 45 million families. "Case" poverty is where the breadwinner has something seriously wrong with him – chronic illness, alcoholism, mental deficiency. "Insular" poverty is to be found in limited areas of poor soils and marginal farms, such as the coves of the southern Appalachians and the Ozarks. When we say that poverty has been overcome, we mean that MOST Americans are now ABOVE the line, where in 1909 MOST families were BELOW the line.

It does not follow that Americans have achieved the good life, or are contented in their chromium-plated neon-lighted Utopia. A happy, well-adjusted people would not produce such an ominous crop of juvenile delinquents, or tolerate a Joseph McCarthy as long as it did, or maintain half of its hospital beds for patients suffering from mental disease.

The formula upon which our affluent society is based, furthermore, is a pretty shaky one. Two characteristics are particularly ominous: the continuing threat of inflation, and the "social unbalance" –a plethora of goods in the private sector and not enough in the public. A word about each:

1) To keep the public buying new automobiles, for instance, Detroit has to change its models every year when no technical change may be needed. It shifts the chromium and the paint, adds new pushbutton contraptions to get out of order and run up the repair bills, gives enough new appearance to make last year's model look shabby before use has turned it shabby. Then Detroit summons Madison Avenue to drum on our nervous systems until we are ashamed not to turn in the old for the new. Some such routine has gone on for a long time in all sorts of products, and like many other routines, it keeps accelerating. It is so central to our economy that any

breakdown produces the gravest results. ... American business enterprise not only makes the physical stuff, it also makes the demand for the stuff by a remorseless din of advertising. A substantial part of the output is not wealth but waste, what Veblen called "illth". We buy it primarily to keep up with the Joneses. We buy it, furthermore, on the installment plan, forcing consumer credit into the stratosphere, and generating a perpetual creeping inflation. Everyone of course is against inflation, but our financial pundits firmly reject any program which could effectively halt it - such as price and wage controls.

2) Social unbalance is the other shaky foundation under American affluence. We have a surfeit of some things and are starved for others; too many annual models and not enough schoolrooms. Schoolhouses lie in the field of public rather than private production; they cannot be wrapped in cellophane and sold with their prices prudently "administered." America today is short of such necessities as:

Adequate conservation programs	Clean Rivers	Unpolluted Air
Open spaces, wilderness areas	Parks & Playgrounds	Mental Health Research
Urban redevelopment programs	Research in pure science	
Adequate commuting service	Scholarships for bright youngsters who cannot	
Safe highways		afford college
Adequate parking	Support of the arts.	
Adequate law courts where calendars are not overcrowded.		
Juvenile delinquency programs	Educational TV	
Pure food and drug inspection		

The list could be indefinitely extended. Out of 31.5 million children in the public schools in 1958, there was no room for 2.3 million. So we put them in cellars, old barns, abandoned warehouses, and on double shift. The kids in my town go to a double shift high school.

What Galbraith calls "the conventional wisdom" holds grimly to the thought, inherited from Ricardo and made ferocious by Herbert Spencer that only private output constitutes wealth; public output is at best a necessary evil. This curious mental twist which would have astonished Pericles and Marcus Aurelius, results in some strange anomalies. Main street is jammed with saffron-colored dreamboats and no place to park them. We picnic on cellophane-packaged foods from a gleaming portable icebox, beside a polluted stream lined with billboards, empty beer cans and bits of discarded Kleenex. " The counterpart of increasing opulence," says Galbraith, "will be deepening filth," of which the man-made smog of Southern California is an outstanding exhibit. If the U.S. could achieve a balance of true wealth, namely consumer goods and public outlays complementing one another, the range of civilized human wants would expand, leaving far less to be contrived by the tom-toms of Madison Avenue.

Social unbalance , like consumer credit, has ~~xxxxxxxx~~ , and we may be nearer than the experts think. Detroit has taken a terrible beating in its 1958 models, and waits in suspense to see whether - despite a billion dollars worth of advertising - the longer, lower, snootier $59's will be taken off the market. Sooner or later our society, if it is to be a viable one, must achieve a practical balance in both physical production and fiscal control/ This does not necessarily mean"socialism," in the accepted sense of "public ownership of the means of production." Private enterprise can go right ahead producing more and more useful commodities by its masterful formula for ever greater output per man hour. But some group somewhere in the economy must take responsibility for seeing that public necessities keep up with private output.

When - and if - peace breaks out, furthermore, an enormous reservoir of manpower and materials will become available for the public sector, as we transfer production from guns to butter, say 30 billion dollars' worth a year. The engineering of that transfer, indeed the ways and means to put our new-found affluence on a firmer basis, as an example to the world, is a challenge to every liberal American. Perhaps a new political party will be founded on it. ...The old slogans are worn out. The "class struggle", "nationalization," the "free market", "bust the trusts" are all but meaningless today. Galbraith has sketched a fresh, exciting blueprint, much closer to the realities of 1959.

Think of it - the end of war, the end of pvoerty, almost within our grasp! Some straight thinking, some concentrated effort, some leaders to lead ...."

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